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Foundations of Writing

Dr. Sherry

**Tell Project**

**When It Started**

I will never forget a specific day in high school when I discovered what I wanted to do when I grew up. It was second semester of junior year in my living independently class. There was a girl in my class who was autistic and had a couple of other learning problems. Her name was Ashley and she was the sweetest girl I have ever met and was the hardest worker in the class. She would leave class about ten minutes early everyday in order to get to her bus in time. Everyday before Ashley would leave she would go up to the teacher and ask if she had any homework to complete that night then she would say goodbye and leave. One day after Ashley left this one girl in my class was very rude and asked loudly in a mean voice “why is she so weird?” this made everyone gasp in surprise. For me it was so hard to not jump up and yell at her for being so rude and disrespectful. I have grown up with my little cousin who has Down syndrome and am protective if anyone tries to talk to her or treat her like she is different. This protective feeling I get towards my cousin is the same feeling I had when she said this about Ashley. I held in my anger and thought really hard about why this situation made me so upset. That is when I had an epiphany; I realized that all I wanted to do with my life help children with special needs. I want to make a difference in peoples lives and help children with disabilities be as successful as possible in their future. It was this protectiveness I felt towards Ashley, the same feelings I have for my cousin that made me realize that this was what I wanted to do with the rest of my life.

**Living In The Moment**

As a freshman at Bloomsburg University, I decided to major in a dual major of early childhood education and special education with a concentration in sign language. I decided this because I knew this major would give me many opportunities in the future to help children and make a difference in their lives. My first special education class was so interesting. We learned about so many different types of disabilities and the signs of disability and the best way to help people with these disabilities. We were given so much information it was a little overwhelming at times, but it was still very exciting and made me look forward to coming to class.

I have always been fascinated in special education and decided it would be beneficial for me to learn sign language. I thought that this would give me more opportunities to help others and that it may come in handy in the special education world to have a background of sign language. As interesting as this seemed to me, I soon learned that learning another language would be a very difficult task. My sign language class was only once a week, and without the repetition throughout the week I began to struggle. There were times when I wanted to give up and drop the course, along with my concentration. However, I would then remember why I took the class in the first place. I want to make a difference in the world and sign language could help me do that. So I decided to stick with it and try my best to get my grade up so I could move forward in the curriculum.

This part of my life has really made me realize what I care about most in life. At times I face challenges that I don’t know if I will be able to overcome. Class work is stressful; studying can be hard, even adjusting to college life can be a challenge. However; despite these obstacles, remembering why I decided to go to college makes it easier. My ultimate goal to help others and make a difference in someone’s life couldn’t be done with putting in hard work. The epiphany I had back in high school is the reason I come to class everyday, and the reason I study as much as possible.

**Everything Works Out**

Now that I have finally graduated from Bloomsburg University and found a career working with special needs children I can finally accomplish the epiphany I had way back in high school. I feel that getting an education had really helped me accomplish a better future and has helped me get the job I have today. Just knowing that I am making a difference in a child’s life gives me a reason to get up and go to work everyday.

The first day I walked in that building I just knew that I made the right decision. I was finally living my dream job and all the hard work I did in college was going to pay off. Seeing the smile on a child’s face and knowing that I helped put it there is the best feeling in the world. I love my job and wouldn’t change it for the world. In a strange way I have that bully from back in high school to thank. Without her being mean to Ashley I may never have realized what I wanted to do with my life. This has taught me that you never know what will influence you. A simple incident could change your life forever.